

THE  
PETITION  
OF THE  
PROTESTANTS  
IN  
FRANCE  
TO THEIR  
KING

Upon Account of the

TREATY  
OF  
PEACE.

---

LONDON Printed, and Re-printed at  
GLASGOW. 1697.



( 2<sup>d</sup> )  
A PETITION presented to the King  
France. By the Protestants in his Kingdom, who  
have been formerly constrain'd to embrace the Ro-  
man Religion.

To the KING.

S I R,

**Y**Our Subjects, who profess a Religion which the  
Edicts call the *Pretended Reformed*, and of which  
you have forbid<sup>d</sup>em the publick exercise for some years  
come to throw themselves at Your Majesty's Feet, to  
make known to your Majesty their humble Remonstrances  
and to implore Your Compassion upon their Miseries  
which are so dreadful, that your Majesty cannot cast  
Your Eyes upon their deplorable Condition, without  
some Pity upon their sufferings. Your Majesty, Sir, has  
always made it Your chief Glory to stop the Progress  
of Your Arms, and to suspend the Course of your Vic-  
tories, in order to give Peace to Europe. Must Your own  
Subjects, who never violated the Fidelity which they  
owe You, and which the Religion that they profess  
joyns<sup>d</sup>em to pay You, be the only Persons that are to be  
depriv'd of Your Royal Bounty ? What have they done,  
and of what deformed Colours have their Enemys made  
use of, to black<sup>n</sup>em in Your Majesty's Eyes ?

They are perswaded, that next to their Duty to God  
they are oblig'd to pay your Majesty an unlimited O-  
bedience. They know no person upon Earth who can  
absolve<sup>d</sup>em from that Fidelity which is your due. To  
Fear God and Honour your Majestie, to spend their E-  
states and Lives in your Service, this among them is  
an inviolable maxim which they take care to inculcate  
into their Children. No Troubles of the preceeding  
Reign



Reigns can be imputed to them without the highest injustice. Your Majesty is too clear-sighted, and your Council too penetrating, not to be well satisfy'd that those Commotions were caus'd either by Princes, lawful Heirs to the Crown which they transmitted to your Majesty, in defending it against those who attempted to usurp it, or by some Grandees of the Kingdom, who never want Pretences, especially when they have conceived an Opinion, that a Chief Minister abuses the Authority of his Prince. In a word, since your Majesty ascended the Throne, and took the Reins of Government into your own Hands, your Supplicants never departed from their Duty. They can also boast the Approbation wherewith your Majesty has honour'd their Fidelity, which has always been firm and constant, tho' they were powerfully solicited in the time of your Majesty's Minority, whose undoubted Right they have always held Inviolable and Sacred.

We make no question, Sir, but that we have been painted forth to Your Majesty, too much taken up with publick Affairs, throughly to understand our Religion, as a sort of People whom a pure Spirit of Libertinism held engag'd in our Profession, and who would quit it without any Trouble or Remorse, so soon as they should behold it beset with Thorns, and environ'd with dreadful Calamities and Torments, by the multitude of Edicts and Declarations which they wrested in a manner out of Your Majesty's Hands. But we implore Your Majesty, Sir, by that Royal Goodness which causes the Repose of Your Subjects, to reflect at present upon the Counsels which have been given your Majesty, and upon this pretended Libertinism, with which they have disfigured us in Your Majesty's sight. They can never say, that a Spirit of Libertinism could oblige so many Thousand persons to quit their Country,



try, a Country full of all manner of Blessings, to  
 their bread among Forreigners, to expose themselves  
 to the danger of being confin'd to prisons, Cloisters,  
 sent to the Gallies, as some have been of all Condition  
 and Characters. Of necessity, Sir, the Power of Conscience  
 must be very great that can prevail with men  
 to undergo such Extremitities.

'Tis true, that if a Conscience ignorant and prejudic'd by false principles should engage in Crimes that  
 troubl'd the Repose of Society, Your Majesty had reason  
 to suppress the Licentiousness of a Turbulent and  
 Criminal Conscience. But, Sir, we are convinc'd that  
 our greatest Enemies can lay no such thing to our charge.  
 Our Morals are pure, and without reproach, in respect  
 of God, in respect of Your Majesty, and in respect of  
 Society. As for our Doctrine, of what Error can they  
 convict it? We admit the Symbols of Faith composed  
 by the first Occumenic Councils, and the Symbol of  
 the Creed which is call'd the Apostles. We believe in one  
 God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. We believe  
 ourselves redeem'd by the Sacrifice of Jesus Christ our  
 Lord and Redeemer, provided we partake of the Merits  
 of his Death and Sufferings, by a lively Faith, operating  
 in good Works, and by a sincere Repentance. We  
 admit in the Holy Eucharist, a Spiritual Eating of the  
 Flesh of Jesus Christ, We Baptize in the Name of the  
 Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for the Remission of sins.  
 We invoke the Almighty in the Name of Jesus Christ  
 and by his Intercession, as he commanded us. This, Sir,  
 is the substance of our Religion. Your Doctors  
 agree upon all these Articles, and admit 'em as we do.

We cannot adore the Sacrament of the Eucharist  
 and it cannot be deny'd but that we should be Idolaters  
 if we should adore it, considering the Opinions which  
 we hold, so that no Body can constrain us to do so  
 without



without forcing us to commit the greatest of Crimes.  
 We implore Your Majestie to think of it. Pardon us,  
 Sir, if we speak freely to your Majesty upon the Sub-  
 ject of our Tears and Groans. We are not, Sir, what-  
 ever Name they give us; we are not those ancient  
 Hereticks against whom the Church has justly fulminat-  
 ed, because they had nothing but the Name of Chri-  
 stian, which they dishonour'd as well by the Monstru-  
 ousness of their Doctrine, as the Impurity of their Mo-  
 rals, if we refuse to believe the Doctrine of Purgatory  
 and Indulgences, the Invocation of Saints, the Wor-  
 ship of Images, the Veneration of Relicks, and those  
 other petty Devotions, invented by the Monks in the  
 latter Ages, 'tis because those Points are not to be  
 found in the Holy Scripture, and we believe we can-  
 not admit 'em with a safe Conscience upon the warrant  
 of Humane Authority.

We speak, Sir, of Humane Authority; for we are  
 convinc'd, that if GOD had been pleas'd to erect a vi-  
 sible Tribunal upon Earth, to which we should submit  
 our Consciences in Matters of Religion, this infallible  
 Tribunal would without all contradiction, have been so  
 characteriz'd, that it would have been an easie thing  
 to have known it. It highly concern'd the Safety and  
 Repose of the Consciences of the Faithfull. Now your  
 Majesty well knows, that even in your own Commu-  
 nion, this Tribunal is a thing contested between the  
 Pope and the Councils. All the Doctors of your King-  
 dom decide it in favour of the Councils. All the Do-  
 ctors of Italy and many others hold for the Pope. The  
 Difficulties alledg'd on both sides are so considerable  
 that not being able with that Certainty which the  
 Faith requires, to find out this infallible Tribunal, we  
 believe it the safest way to follow the Word of GOD  
 only, for the Rule of Faith. And to us it seems that  
 our



our Conduct has nothing in it of that Obstinacy which makes People Hereticks according to the Canon of the Church.

We pray to GOD, Sir, for the long Continuance and Prosperity of Your Majesty's Reign; but after your Majesty is not Immortal. It may be, Sir, that upon the Bed of Death, perhaps your Majesty then may come to be touch'd with some Apprehensions of Fear and Compunction, for having constrain'd the Consciences of your Subjects who still give your Majesty an Account of their Faith with all Obedience and Respect, whenever you required it from them. For the sake of the Almighty, Sir, we implore your Majesty to consider, that perhaps at the last moments of your Life, the dreadful Calamities of so great a Number of your Subjects, in which the malice of people, counterfeiting Devotion, have engag'd your Majesty to precipitate them, may come to present themselves before your Eyes, and trouble the Repose of your Soul. For in a word, Sir, permit us to speak it once more, what have we done to merit the drawing of your Indignation upon us? That our Religion were false; your Majesty by sending your Teachers among us to instruct us, has done all that God requires from a Christian Prince, without any Obligation on that Piety laid upon You, to revoke your Word and your Edicts. The same God who Ordains us to labour for the Salvation of our Neighbours, forbids us to force the Conscience and constrain Men to turn Hypocrites whether they will or no. We can hardly believe that the Violences which have been offer'd us ever came to the knowledge of your Majesty, or that You would endure that the History of your Glorious Reign shall be clouded with the Relations of them, and that ever it should be said, that You persecuted your most faithful Subjects, because they desir'd to worship God according



ing to his VVord, and the motions of their Conscien-  
 ces, without any other Defect in their Duty. For these  
 several years that we have suffer'd, we have carefully  
 examin'd our Religion. VVe can also say, tho' it should  
 prove to our shame, that we have examin'd it with a  
 secret Desire to meet with Errors in it, that we might  
 be free to follow your Majesty's Order. But this exa-  
 mination has serv'd to no other purpose than to corro-  
 borate us in the Faith we have profess'd from our In-  
 fancy.

VVe kept our selves in silence, so long as your Ma-  
 jesty was engag'd in this toilsome VVar. Now that  
 you are labouring the Peace of *Europe*, vouchsafe us,  
 Sir, what we demand with all the Respect we owe your  
 Majesty, the Peace of our Consciences: Some implore  
 your Majesty to restore them their VVives and their  
 Children; others demand their Fathers and their Hus-  
 bands. Some pray your Majesty, that they may be de-  
 liver'd from Cloysters, Prisons, and barbarous Climats,  
 where they are confin'd among Savages; others to be  
 releas'd from Chains and Oars, where they sit bound a-  
 mong the worst of Caitiffs. Let us not be the only  
 persons in Distress, to whom your Throne and Good-  
 ness are inaccessible. VVe beg of your Majesty, to  
 receive peaceably, as humble Subjects, and faithfull to  
 your Majesty, with Liberty to VVorship God according  
 to our Consciences. Suffer, Sir, Oh, suffer a great  
 number of your Subjects, whom their Religion has con-  
 strain'd to depart your Kingdom, to return again, that  
 they may end their Days under your Royal Authority,  
 and call upon God one among another as we were ac-  
 customed to do.

Receive, Great Sir, with your wonted Goodness,  
 this Petition, which would have been subscrib'd by se-  
 veral Thousands of Persons, if your Majesty would have  
 given



given us permission. Give Ear to our just Desires  
 We address our selves to your Majesty, we supp  
 your Majesty to cast your Eyes upon our miseries,  
 upon the Tears which we privately shed in our Pri  
 lics. Our Fidelity is known to your Majesty; re  
 us, Great Sir, your Protection, and the Effects of  
 Goodness, and your Justice, which have been  
 from us by surprize, and upon false accusations, we  
 have aggravated your Majesty's Prejudice against  
 We shall pray to God, as still we do, for the Pro  
 rity of your Reign, and of your Sacred Person,  
 we shall leave to our Children the same just Sentiments  
 of Obedience and Fidelity.